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Religion and Learning capable of being  
rendered mutually serviceable, or mu-  
tually prejudicial, to each other.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

A T  
St. M A R Y's,  
O N

ACT-SUNDAY, JULY II. 1762.

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## DAN. XII. 10.

*And none of the Wicked shall understand; but the Wise shall understand.*

**W**HEN there are two things which are nearly related, and yet very different in themselves, it frequently happens, that, instead of attending to their Connection, Men set them in Opposition to one another, divide into Parties about them, and then, as is natural, respectively praise or dispraise them, according to which Side they have espoused. This hath been remarkably the Case with Regard to *Learning* and *Religion*. Whole Sects of Men, that would be thought extraordinarily pious, have very rudely decryed the *Former* as a profane, carnal Thing, utterly subversive of what they esteem the only valuable Quality, true Godliness. Whilst, on the other hand, a large and more formidable Party, loud in their Praises of Science, and vain of their

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high attainments in it, have treated the *Lat-ter* with great Scorn and Contempt, and represented it as the Bane of all liberal Knowledge. But however Men may have set these Endowments seemingly at Variance, yet are they far from being really Enemies to one another. Knowledge and Godliness are the two great Ornaments of human Nature; Providence therefore hath taken Care that there should be a secret Union, a certain mutual Connection and Dependence, between Things so excellent in themselves.

Agreeable to this; sacred Writ frequently describes them as shedding a kindly Influence upon each other, and thriving best together: *Learning*, as naturally leading us to the Fear of the Lord, or *Religion*; and again Religion as enabling us to make a greater Progress in Learning. Thus *Solomon*, of all others the best Judge in a Case of this Nature, promises, that they who <sup>a</sup> *cry after Knowledge shall understand the Fear of the Lord*. And then, to induce those that would be learned to be religious also, He declares: <sup>b</sup> *that Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth*. To the same Purpose holy *David* affirms his superiour Wisdom to be the Effect of religious Obedi-

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 2. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. 14. 6.



ence : *I am wiser than the Aged, because I keep thy Commandments.* And the Text carrieth this Point still farther; asserting not only that the *Wise*, that is, the religious and good, *shall understand*; but that *none of the Wicked shall understand.* Where Understanding, though meant of religious Truths, particularly the Truths contained in the Book of *Daniel*, may with great Propriety be extended to all useful Learning. In which more unrestrained Sense I shall beg Leave to consider it; and thence take occasion to shew,

I. *First*, That Religion and Learning are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually help to improve and advance each other.

II. *Secondly*, That, notwithstanding this, each of these is liable to great Abuses and productive of many Errours, when prosecuted apart and without any View to the other.

*Lastly*, I shall consider what excellent Effects they produce when united.

*First* then, as to the Tendency which Learning hath to improve our Minds in Religion.

a Psal. 119. 100.

As the primary Step towards Goodness is a Freedom from Vice, whatever helps to preserve us from this, must be a Friend to Religion. Now this is an End, to which Nothing conduces so effectually, in a natural way, as a close Application to Business. It is to Providence's having made it necessary, that the Bulk of Mankind should be engaged in one Sort of Employment or other, that we owe a great Part of that Sobriety and Virtue which still remains in the World. And considered in this Light, the Study of Learning is peculiarly excellent. Other Callings; whilst they employ the Body, leave the Mind almost free to pursue its natural Bent, and to form whatever Schemes of future Pleasure or Mischief it pleases. For which Reason they may seem fitted rather to suspend the Commission of wicked Actions, than wholly to prevent them. But the Business now under Consideration hath this superiour Advantage, that it interrupts and breaks off the natural Course of our Thoughts, calls away our Attention from lower Objects, and for the Time engrosses the whole Man. By which Means we pass away those Hours innocently at least, which, had the Mind been left to follow her own Suggestions, would probably have been much worse employed.

Add

Add to this, that the *Retirement* which a Man is obliged to, *who seeketh and intermeddeth with all Wisdom*, not only keeps him out of the Way of a thousand Temptations, but naturally leads him into a serious Train of Thoughts, and opens his Mind to great and worthy Conceptions. On which Account it hath ever been deemed a Situation, of all others, the most friendly to Devotion. Were there no other Fruits therefore of Study but those of withdrawing us from the world, and teaching us what it is to enjoy a calm, serious and religious Frame of Mind, it could not be reckoned wholly useless. But, considering the Matter it is conversant about, it bids fair to procure us still higher Advantages. There are few Branches of Learning that we can pursue, but what have a Tendency to mend the Heart as well as to improve the Understanding. Even those Sciences, which seem least calculated for this, are yet, by the Wisdom of those Masters who have written in them, generally fraught with Examples and Illustrations of a virtuous Import; which an attentive and towardsly Mind will not heedlessly pass over, but treasure up and convert to its own Improvement. By these Means virtuous Sentiments are early implanted in the Mind, and,

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as it were, naturally grow up and unfold themselves with it. We are perhaps hardly sensible how much Good is done by little, and seemingly undesigned Strokes of this Kind. — And as to the Attainment of Languages, this cannot be made without the Perusal of such Works as have either been penned by the Hands of excellent Men, or written even *with the Finger of GOD*. We must therefore have been greatly wanting to ourselves, if in travelling through these, for the Sake of their Language only, we have not by the Way made some Improvement in Goodness, and to our *Knowledge added Virtue*. In short, it fares with us in Pursuits of this Kind, as with Men engaged in finding out some curious Art or Secret in Nature; with whom Nothing is more common than to light upon some accidental Hint or Discovery; which, though foreign to the Point they had View, proves of higher Value, than the Thing for which they were immediately searching.

And if even here we reap some spiritual Advantage, what may we not expect from Studies of a nobler Kind, such as those of *Nature, Morality and Religion*? If we study these as Sciences only, they can hardly fail of making good Impressions upon us. In Re-  
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searches of this Sort we meet with Something, that wonderfully falls in with the natural Greatness of the Soul; Something, that begets in it the profoundest Reverence for its Creator, that warms it with the tenderest Sentiments of Love towards Mankind, and raises in it the noblest and most sublime Expectations. And although these Flames of Devotion, which thus melt and subdue the Heart in Secret, may perhaps go out, when we mix with the World again, yet are we not therefore to imagine that they are wholly lost upon us. They leave behind them a secret Relish for Virtue, and often repeated give the Mind such a Bias towards what is Praiseworthy, as is seldom diverted, much less entirely counteracted, during our whole Lives.

But beside this mechanical Effect, if we may so call it, which Reading and Study have upon the Mind; a Man engaged in them is for the Time transplanted, as it were, into a new World; wherein Things do not appear in that Disorder and Confusion, in which he hath been used to behold them. Books, being the Product of Men's most serious and deliberate Thoughts, generally regulate Affairs much better than the World doth. In ordinary Life, Vice is often loaded with Honours, and  
Virtue

Virtue discountenanced and repulsed. But in the Regions of Learning Things are set right again. There Virtue meets with her due Reward of Approbation and Honour; Vice with its deserved Punishment of Infamy and Rebuke. Hence a Man that hath spent his Youth among Books, and been thereby accustomed to see Things as they ought to be, and not as they really are, does not easily fall into the Ways of the World. His Studies, besides acquainting him with his Duty, inspire him with an Ambition of performing it with Honour and Honesty, and according to the great Patterns which he hath met with and admired in ancient Story. These, next to a frequent Intercourse with Men of Worth, (which is also another Advantage that the Cultivation of Letters will help him to,) are some of the best Means of establishing the Mind in Virtue.

Were Learning then only thus gently to lead Men on to the Practice of *moral* Duties, it would, in the Issue be of singular Service to Religion. But it hath, over and above, a Tendency to do this in a yet more direct and immediate Manner. For though all Men are provided with Knowledge sufficient to carry them to Heaven, if they will but duly apply it,



it, yet Religion, being of a spiritual and abstracted Nature, is best suited to the Comprehension of Men of studious, contemplative Lives. To them as such, Religion must appear more attractive, and its Proofs fuller and more conclusive, than to Men of gross and unexercised Minds.

Nor farther is Learning, although frequently represented as a Friend to Scepticism, of less Service to the Cause of Religion in general, than to the Promotion of it in particular Persons. We find that GOD, who commonly makes Use of the most likely Means to accomplish His Purposes, did not call forth one of the untaught *Israelites* to give Laws to his People, but appointed *Moses* to this Work, who <sup>a</sup> *was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*. The same may be observed of *St. Paul*, who, no doubt, for his excellent Learning, as well as other Endowments, was declared to be <sup>b</sup> *a chosen Vessel to bear CHRIST's Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel*. And indeed the rest of the Apostles, who had not been blessed with the Benefits of a liberal Education, were forbidden to enter upon their Ministry, till their Deficiencies,

<sup>a</sup> Acts 7. 22.

<sup>b</sup> Acts 9. 15.

in this Respect, were supplied by extraordinary Gifts from Heaven.

And if Learning was thought no unnecessary Companion to go along with Miracles themselves, can it be less expedient for the Uses of Religion when those are ceased? It is true, no great Depth of Knowledge, where Men are provided with able Instructors, is requisite for the *Practice* of Religion: a Circumstance highly favourable to the Bulk of Mankind. But then, it is no less true, that the whole Compass of Learning is necessary for its Cultivation and Defence. The Church is a Vineyard which requires Labourers of every Kind; so that whether they be skilled in the Knowledge of Languages or Antiquity, or deep in the Science of Philosophy, History and Nature, or expert in the Arts of Reasoning and Persuasion, they may find constant Employment here. The Truth is, the Sciences, though each of them hath its particular and proper End, do all point to one common Center, the Benefit of Religion: like those ancient Prophecies of the *Messiah*, which all referred to CHRIST and plainly terminated in him, though, in the mean while, each of them almost had its own private and more immediate Interpretation.

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It may be thought indeed, that as all the Doctrines of Christianity have been clearly explained and the Objections to them fully answered, Learning, as a Support to Religion, is, in a Manner, now become needless. But alas! it is not enough that every Thing which hath been, or perhaps can be, advanced against this Institution, stands already refuted upon Record. So long as there are living Enemies to our Religion, there must be living Friends to oppose them. For controversial Writings, how well soever executed, have rarely the good Fortune to live long. After having been much read and talked of a while, they grow into Disuse, and, being once thrown aside, are seldom resumed or heard of again. When therefore old Objections are revived, as they will be though refuted a thousand Times, it will signify little to refer Men to former Answers. The Matter must be canvassed anew, and treated in a Manner agreeable to the Taste and Colour of the Age, otherwise the Objections will reach to Places, where the Solutions will never come: a Misfortune which, it is to be feared, does not seldom happen even where they meet with an immediate Reply. Was there not therefore a constant Succession of learned Men to step forth on such Occasions,



to face the Enemy, and stop the spreading Mischief, Christianity would be vanquished by the very Weapons, which its Friends had before so often repelled. It is true, Religion for a while might not want Favourers among the Multitude. But what Assistance would these be able to give her? Men not regularly trained up to Arms, how well disposed soever, would, by their aukward Management of them, rather injure than promote the Cause of Truth; for as much as the noblest Subjects, when rudely handled, are the most open to profane Ridicule and soonest provoke it. Which Considerations, by the Way, ought to make pious Men cautious how they set light by human Improvements, or by Places set apart for the Cultivation of liberal Knowledge.

Having now gone through some of the Helps, (for I pretend not to enumerate them all) which Religion receives from Learning, let us proceed to consider what Returns She makes for these Benefits.—Indeed Learning is by no Means the necessary Consequence of a religious Life: To make it subservient to this, a previous Application to Knowledge must be supposed. In which Case, the Assistances that She yields are very considerable. For where the Constitution is good, Health, Chearful-  
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ness and Vigour are the almost certain Attendants of a religious Life: And where it is naturally weak, the surest Way to obtain these Advantages is by following the Course which Virtue prescribes. How expedient these Blessings must be for the Attainment of Knowledge, and how slow and interrupted our Progress therein must be without them, are Points sufficiently known. Nor does a religious Course of Life only keep the Faculties clear and fit for Use, but also greatly heightens and improves them. Contemplations on heavenly Things banish all low and groveling Thoughts, refine and elevate the Mind, and give it such Vigour and Energy as a Soul sunk in Sin, and debased with Sensuality, is wholly a Stranger to. Accordingly, the most approved Writers of Antiquity appear, from what is known of their History, to have been Men eminent for Piety and Virtue. A good Heart was the Fund whence those excellent Sentiments were drawn, which have been the Delight and Admiration of all succeeding Times.

What renders a religious Life, in this View, still farther conspicuous, is, that together with enlarging our Faculties, it gives us the most Leisure and fairest Opportunities of exerting

erting them. Sensual Pleasures, besides impairing the Understanding, are continually making large Encroachments upon our Time, and drawing our Studies into a narrower Compass. Nay they so fill the Head with idle and roving Fancies, that even the little Time they allow us for nobler Pursuits, is no better than a broken Sleep, when the Mind is tossed and distracted with the Adventures of the foregoing Day. But we have Nothing of this kind to fear from Religion. The Interruptions she gives to the Labours of the Mind are but few; and those such as tend rather to settle and prepare it for intellectual Inquiries, than any Way to disturb and dissipate its Thoughts.

We may farther observe, that Persons devoted to Piety are, on divers other Accounts, most likely to make a notable Progress in Knowledge. Their Minds are generally tractable and docile, and prepossessed in Favour of Truth. Their Motives to study likewise are stronger. For besides the common Ones of Amusement, Curiosity, Emulation and the like; a good Man is sensible, that he was not sent into the World for Nothing: he knows that *he hath a Work to work*; and therefore, whatever it be, he applies himself to it in earnest.



nest. And it is well known, that when once an eager Desire of learning any Art or Science is kindled in the Breast, it carries Men to higher Degrees of Perfection therein, than Parts and Opportunities would ever have done without that Advantage.

Lastly, when we set ourselves to work with these honest Intentions, we may reasonably expect some higher Assistance, than what mere human Means can give us. That the Almighty Being, who endowed us with those Abilities, which we are wont to call the Gifts of Nature, can intermix Himself with our Thoughts and impart to us yet farther Emanations of His Wisdom, hath been a prevailing Doctrine through all Ages. Thus the ancient Heathens supposed every great Action to have been suggested by some invisible Power. And what is more to our Purpose, they rarely undertook any Work of Learning without calling in some Deity to their Assistance. These natural Notions we find every where confirmed by the inspired Writings. *Elihu* the wisest, as well as best, of *Job's* Friends, says: *there is a Spirit in Man: and the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth him*

a *Job* 32. 8.

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*Understanding.* Nay, in building the tabernacle, even the mechanical Skill and Ingenuity of the Workmen are attributed by *Moses* to the Wisdom, which <sup>a</sup>God *had put into their Hearts*. And our Blessed Lord hath made use of a very familiar Instance to establish this Doctrine: *‘If Ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts to Your Children: how much more shall Your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?’* Now if there be a Promise of this Assistance, when duly applied for, on all Occasions worthy of the divine Interposition, we have the highest Reason to hope for it in the Prosecution of Studies, that are calculated for the Improvement of ourselves in all useful Knowledge, the Advancement of Religion, and the general Benefit of Mankind; For as much as the Holy Spirit, by His Office, is peculiarly interested in the Furtherance of these Ends.

Having now considered the several Respects in which Learning and Religion mutually help to improve and advance each other, whilst we have the Promotion of both in View; the farther Necessity of keeping them always so will appear from considering,

a Exod. 36. 1.      b Luke 11. 13.

II. *Secondly*, That, notwithstanding this, each of these is liable to great Abuses and productive of many Errours, when prosecuted apart and without any View to the other. And

*First* as to Religion. Although too much Pains cannot be taken to season the Mind with Devotion, yet as this is chiefly seated in the Affections, it stands in great Need of Knowledge to check and direct it. For there is a certain Extravagance or Enthusiasm, which most Men run into, more or less, according to the different Warmth of their Imaginations, when their reigning Passion is not under the Control of sound Reason. Thus the Hero's Bravery mounts up into a Fool-hardiness and Contempt of Life: whilst the Man of Pleasure pursues his Recreations with an Eagerness, and talks of them with a Rapture, that can be deemed little less than Madness. But, of all others, the devout Mind is most subject to this Passion; for which Reason *Enthusiasm* is a Term not commonly applied to Flights and Extravagancies of any other kind. That so Divine a Principle as Devotion, which always betokens a Goodness of Heart, should yet be liable to Excess, is greatly to be lamented.



But so it is : When a Man of strong Passions and no great Depth of Knowledge, *particularly* applies his Mind this Way, he is rarely observed to keep his Imagination within due Bounds. Those sudden Flames of Devotion which he feels, and which a Man of equal Piety, but less Warmth of Temper, may be a Stranger to, he fancies are kindled and blown up by Something more than Human within him. And having read how Prophets and holy Men of Old were Divinely inspired, he is thereby farther confirmed in this Opinion ; never considering what extraordinary Occasions these had for Helps of this kind, nor the Proofs which they were enabled to give of their being miraculously assisted. These Thoughts dwelling upon his Mind, and being in Secret cherished by him, so disturb and craze his Imagination, that he is at last thrown into strange Extasies, and believes himself governed by supernatural Impulses and Instigations, in every Thing he does. To a Man under these deplorable Circumstances, not only his own Reason, but the Reason of other Men, nay even the revealed *Words of Truth and Soberness* are wholly useless.

But as Enthusiasm arises from a misguided Notion, that we are the only Persons favour-  
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ed and approved by Heaven ; so there is another Error, more unhappy for ourselves, though less hurtful to the Public, founded on the Opinion, that God hath conceived a secret Hatred towards us, and harboured, as it were, malicious Designs against us, from the Beginning. This, as well as Fanaticism, arises from a Mixture of Ignorance and Devotion, with this Difference only, that the *former* happens, when they are blended together in a Mind teeming with warm and sprightly Conceptions ; the *latter*, when they meet in a Constitution naturally inclined to Dejection and Melancholy. For then Devotion, instead of chearing and animating the Soul, which are its genuine Effects, does but fill it with unreasonable Fears and Apprehensions, beget in it such a Despondency of God's Mercy, such a Disrelish for all the Delights of the World, such an Impatience of even Life itself, as a merciful Creator never intended his faithful and devout Servants should feel. Now though Learning cannot alter or mend the Constitution, yet will it help us to more favourable Notions of the supreme Being, and thereby prevent such Conceptions as are most likely to fall in with, and to heighten, this natural Malady of the Soul.

But the most general Effect of religious Ignorance is *Superstition*. This does not despair of obtaining the Divine Favour, but only goes about to do it by little, unmanly Ways and trifling Performances; making Religion to consist in Things wherein Religion has no Concern. Hence not only ridiculous Habits and Forms are introduced, but useful Ceremonies carried beyond their first pious Intention of preserving Decency and Order in the Church, and so at last improved into essential Parts of Worship. Thus most of the Vanities, that have found Sanctuary in the Church of *Rome*, were admitted thither in Ages, when there was much *Zeal* for Religion and but little *Knowledge*. And if Learning hath not since driven them out, it is not for Want of a *Tendency* to do this; but because the Prejudices of some, and the Interests of others, have hitherto been too strong for its Influence. For a Proof of this, we need only alledge the great Reformation; which not only took Place soon after the Revival of Learning in *Europe*, but was, in Countries where this was allowed its full Scope, a direct Consequence of it. Nay even in Places where, for the Reasons above mentioned, Learning was not permitted to proceed thus far, it however



ever put the more Knowing of the Romish Communion upon Shifts to palliate their absurd Doctrines and Practices, and forced them to introduce many Refinements and Corrections into Popery, that are still unknown to it in Regions where Ignorance prevails.

These Errours, arising from mistaken Devotion, might be farther enlarged upon. But as they are *Excesses* in Religion, and what therefore the present Age is in no Danger of *generally* running into, it may be sufficient just to have mentioned them. I now hasten to shew, on the other hand, the Dangers of Learning, without any Mixture of Devotion in it.

And indeed, the best that can be expected from this is a Life of Temperance, Sobriety and Justice; which, however commendable so far as it goes, falls greatly short of the Life of a Christian. Yet how often is it the Fate of learned Men to stop here? Their Reading and Studies have kept them at a Distance from the Temptations of Sense, and taught them many refined Lessons concerning the Powers of Reason, the Principle of Benevolence, and the Obligations of Honour; but left them in Ignorance of the plain and humble Doctrines of a crucified JESUS. The Case of  
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such Men is the more to be lamented, because they stick at the Threshold, as it were; when one Step farther (a Step to them of all others the least inconvenient) would bring them within the Pale of Christianity; where their dry Morals, their cold, insipid State of Virtue, would be improved into a lively, active and genuine Piety.

But as a Man, that duly considers the Importance of Religion, will, in all his Studies, have an Eye to its Benefit; so when this is out of the Question, his Mind is apt to lanch out into Inquiries after Things, which are either trifling in themselves; or else of such an abstruse Nature, or so remote from his own Times, that, he can never bring them within the Reach of his Knowledge. Many Times what we call Study consists of Inquiries after Things of one or other of these kinds. Were we, indeed, to live as long as Men did in the first Ages of the World, we might venture to throw away half a Century in such useless or unsatisfactory Researches as these: The Experiment then could not ruin us. But alas! Life is now so contracted and short, so much of it rendered useless by Indispositions of one Sort or other, or so much of it necessarily employed in worldly Concerns, that,

that, after all our Pains in the most beneficial Studies, we must be content to leave many Designs unentered upon, many but just sketched out, and indeed almost all unfinished. Can we then have any Time to lay out upon Things, which are either *unworthy* or *impossible* to be known?

And yet if Men are no Friends to Religion and Virtue, it is to be wished that they were always employed in such Studies as these; because then their Labours, though useless, would be harmless too. Which is more than can be expected from them, when they are under the Direction of Men of this Character. For then Learning, which is only an Instrument, instead of being employed in pruning and cultivating Religion, a Purpose it is admirably fitted for, will naturally have its Edge turned against it. Many voluminous Works, now extant among us, are melancholy Proofs of the Truth of this Assertion. However, this is no Argument against Learning as such, which doubtless in its own Nature is much more friendly to Virtue than Vice; but only shews how highly it imports us, whilst we cultivate our Minds with Science, to cherish in them good Dispositions; and to keep this Truth always  
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in Sight, that the sole Merit of Learning consists in the Application of it to beneficial Purposes.

Add to this: that large Attainments in Knowledge, even where the Mind is not otherwise ill disposed, do sometimes strangely unfit Men for the serious Examination and Embracing of Divine Truths. It is a severe Satyre upon mere human Learning, that of all the Places where St. *Paul* preached the Gospel, He no where made fewer Converts than among the *Athenians*. Their Learning indeed had too much refined and polished their Manners, to allow them to use Him with Violence; but it both inclined and qualified them to treat him, and his Doctrines, with such Mockery and Ridicule as He had no where met with before. The Truth is, when Men come, arrayed in all the Pride and Pomp of human Learning, to engage in religious Inquiries, and make this the only Armour in which they trust, it seldom happens but that they are foiled in their Attempts. There are several Things in Revelation, as well as in Nature, that will not bend and submit themselves to human Knowledge; but require, like the grave Commands of a Father, a silent Compliance from us, during our Continuance in this infant

fant State. This to Men, who think Nothing too hard for their Comprehension, proves a difficult Task; and often inclines them to throw aside all Revelation as an extravagant, superstitious Dream, fit only to be imposed on vulgar Minds.

But Persons endowed with a slender Stock of Knowledge and but little Godliness, are in a still worse Situation. Indeed Knowledge is so desireable a Quality, that one can hardly go about to discourage the smallest Attainments in it. But thus much is certain, that it often proves a Misfortune to Men, not to have a great Deal more Learning, or else somewhat less. For although there be Nothing in Christianity, which can justly awaken any one's Fears and Jealousies, yet Persons in this mixt Medium, this Twilight, between Learning and Ignorance are strangely apt to be alarmed. They spy many frightful Objects through this glimmering Light, that would have given them no Disturbance in broad Day, and perhaps have wholly escaped their Notice in a thicker Darkness. This puts them upon spreading abroad wonderous Tales about Religion, finding Faults with it, proposing Reformatations of it and the like; which kind of Humour, mixed with a De-

fire of being thought Men of uncommon Discernment, usually terminates in a settled Infidelity. Whereas had such Men made no Pretensions to Science, they would have stood a fair Chance from Example, Education and Custom to have been humble, well-meaning Christians: or had they, on the other hand, been thoroughly learned, they would most probably have been induced, by Argument and Conviction, to pay a dutiful Submission to the Doctrines of revealed Religion.

For as much then as a little Learning is dangerous, and yet no Progress can be made therein but from small Beginnings; it behoves Men to proceed with Patience and Caution through their youthful Studies. It is the Misfortune sometimes of Persons, in this Part of Life, to be premature in their Inquiries, and to meddle with Points, which, according to the common Course of Study, they are not yet fairly arrived at. This brings them acquainted with Objections, to which, for Want of Abilities to solve them, they had better yet have been Strangers. For, being once engaged on the Side of Infidelity, their future Studies, it is to be feared, will hardly be calculated to bring them back again. Men love to persuade themselves that they are in  
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the right, and therefore naturally lean to such Authors, and listen to such Conversation, as are most likely to confirm them in the Opinions, which they have already espoused.

Thus have I endeavoured to shew the Dangers of prosecuting Knowledge and Godliness apart, and the great Abuses; to which, in this Case, they are severally liable; it will now therefore be but Justice,

In the *Last* Place, to consider what excellent Effects they produce when united.

But of these I shall only treat so far as they relate to Religion; which, in several Points of great Moment, is highly benefitted by this Union.

And that *First*, as this helps at once to give a right Direction to Religion, and to temper and allay its too violent Fervours. For as Devotion warms and animates the Soul; fills it with Admiration upon contemplating the Heavens and the Earth, and seeing how the Whole of Things is sustained and governed; makes it burn with Love and Gratitude towards some superiour Being upon our Meeting with any unexpected Success or Deliverance; or look up for Succour in Times of Danger and Affliction; So Learning points out to us the true

Object of Worship on these Occasions; teaches us the best Manner of performing this Worship; prevents us from applying ourselves to any mistaken Duties; and checks our Flights in those that are real and necessary. The Truth is, these two Virtues most happily qualify and correct each other; and, like a due Mixture of Spirit and Judgment in Works of Genius, render our Piety steady, rational and manly; neither refining it into a cold, flat, insipid Correctness, nor yet suffering it to fly out and vent itself in unmeaning Transport and Rage.

*Secondly*, Religion, besides being set right in these essential Points, derives from this Union several other material Advantages. It hence learns to demean itself with due Modesty and Reserve on ordinary Occasions; and, though at the Bottom of all our Actions, not to be forever weakly or ostentatiously shewing itself to the World. Hence too it learns not to claim any improper Seasons for its public Exercise; but to be content with those, which the highest Wisdom human and Divine, hath appointed for it; desiring to be considered by Mankind as their *chief* indeed, but not as their *only*, Concern. In fine, it hence learns not to value itself too highly; but to consider it-  
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self in a true Light, as a *Mean*, not as an *End*; a Mean to promote God's Glory, and the Practice of Virtue and Piety amongst Men, in order to their present and future Happiness; knowing that, unless these Ends are answered, mere Devotion is Nothing worth.

In a Word, Knowledge and Godliness thus united make Religion, what it ought to be, a *reasonable Service*; a Work of the Head and Understanding, as well as of the Heart and Affections. In a Religion, thus tempered and qualified, both Parties may safely join: The over zealous Devotee may comply with it, without endangering his Title to Holiness; and the Man of Reason, without forfeiting his Pretensions to the truest Wisdom.

Let us then bring home these Reflections to ourselves, and consider what an advantageous Situation we of *this* Place enjoy. Whilst *Many*, employed in the lower Offices of Life, must be content to live in Ignorance, and be therefore exposed to all the Errours attending a misguided Devotion: Whilst *Others*, who make some Pretensions to Learning, can, from their Situation, only have it in scanty Measures and an irregular Way, and must therefore be liable to be betrayed into Scepticism by it; *We* are devoted solely to  
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the Cultivation of those Powers, which can best preserve us from running into either Extreme. Can then Beings made for Eternity, and whose Happiness therein must depend on their steering their Course aright in their Voyage through Life, be more profitably employed, than in this Work whereunto we are called?

What then remains, but that we labour to answer the End of this our Appointment? As we are set apart for the Study of Religion and Learning, so are we provided with the best Opportunities for prosecuting it with Success. Let it then be remembered, that suitable Improvements will be expected from us; and that if we neglect to make them, we are only mispending our Time and Fortunes, and bringing Disgrace on ourselves, and on the Place of our Education. Nor is it probable that we shall hereafter obtain these invaluable Blessings. For if we have received no Tincture of Religion *here*, where the best Means are used to render it habitual to us; nor made any Purchase of Learning, where it is, as it were, the sole Traffick and Commerce of the Place; in vain shall we hope to improve ourselves in them, when we come to mix with a World intent on far other Concerns. If then

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we suffer these inestimable Opportunities to be lost, we shall, in all Likelyhood, pass through Life without leaving any other Monuments behind us, than, such as a Man would least of all choose to leave behind him, those of Ignorance and Wickedness. But I forbear—The general Regularity of the Place, and the Readiness of Youth to put themselves under the various Means of Improvement which are offered, encourage us to hope for better Things than these.

But to conclude: though a joint Application to the Study of Religion and Learning hath all along been recommended; yet be it remembered, that they are by no Means of equal Concernment to us. Far be it from us to disparage Learning; but this, however useful or ornamental to Man in his present State of Being, is still but a *temporary* Blessing. *Goodness* is the chief End of Man. It is this that will stand him in stead, when, *whether there be Tongues, they shall cease, whether there be Knowledge it shall vanish away.* In the mean while, how ought it to allay all intemperate Thirst after Science, to reflect, what small Progress can be made therein, and how much of the Lives of Men dedicated to it, is spent in learning and forgetting: How, on the other hand, to ani-  
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mate us in our Pursuits of Goodness, to consider, that a competent Share of this will exalt us at last to such Knowledge, as is too wonderful and excellent for our Attainment here? Let us then *First seek the Kingdom of GOD and His Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto us*—All our Inquiries shall be satisfied in that State, *where we shall know even as also we are known.*

under the various which are offered, encourage us to hope for better Things than these.

But to conclude: though a joint Application to the Study of Religion and Learning hath all along been recommended; yet be it remembered, that they are by no Means of equal Consequence to us. For it is from us to

disengage I esteem it better, however useful or ornamental to Man in his present State of Being, is still but a temporary Blessing. Goodness is the chief End of Man: It is this that will stand him in stead, when, whatever there be of Science, they shall cease, whether there be Knowledge it shall vanish away. In the mean while, how ought it to allay all Intemperate Thirst after Science, to reflect, what small Progress can be made therein, and how much of the Lives of Men dedicated to it, is spent in learning and forgetting: How, on the other hand, to and state